

CHICAGO CALLING

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May Everyone Be Happy

People all over the world are getting ready to welcome the New Year 2022. Good wishes and greetings are being exchanged among friends and relatives. All are trying to forget mistakes and failures and expecting only happiness every moment in the days that will be coming. Happiness is known as 'Ananda' in Sanskrit. There are four types of Happiness:

1. *Vishaya-Ananda* - happiness that arises due to the contact of objects and senses.
2. *Vasana-Ananda* - happiness that arises after the fulfilment of desires.
3. *Bhajana-Ananda* - happiness that arises by taking the holy name of God.
4. *Brahma-Ananda* - Supreme Bliss that is experienced in Nirvikalpa Samadhi - where the mind dissolves in the essential nature of Brahman.

The first three happinesses are of purely temporary nature. Those who want to experience eternal happiness must purify their minds. Without the purification of mind, no one can experience bliss.

Purification of Mind

Shankaracharya gave emphasis on purity of mind. In his book, *Vivekachudamani*, verse 181, he mentioned -

"Tanmanash Shodhana Karyam prayatnena mumukshuna visuddhe sati caitasmin muktih Karaphalayate."

Therefore, the person who earnestly desires liberation must purify his mind. If the mind is purified, liberation is as easily realized as a fruit in the palm of one's hand.

In the Gita also we find Bhagavan Sri Krishna, while giving the list of divine qualities (chapter 16 verses 1-3) mentioned, *"Sattva Samshuddhih"*, which means 'Purity of heart.'

In the Holy Bible we find, "Blessed are those who are pure in heart for they shall see God."

Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna also again and again urged us to make the mind pure—'Suddha'. "Ishwar Suddha moner gochar"—God can be realized only by the Pure mind.

How does the mind become impure?

Guru Vasistha explained to his disciple Sri Rama, *"Drishya-darshana-Sambandhat - - -"* due to the contact of the senses with the sense-objects the mind becomes polluted, impure. Hence, Guru Vasistha strongly suggested to kill, to annihilate the mind, *'Manah-Nashah'*—"destroy the mind." Very strong words—what did he really mean? What is Mind?

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (1.5.3) said about the mind, "Desire, Resolution, Doubt, Faith, want of faith, Patience, Impatience, Modesty, Intelligence, and fear, etc. all this is the mind."

Bhagavad Gita (Ch. 2/62-63) also listed reasons for which the mind become impure:

"Dhyayato vishayan pumsah sangah tesu upajayate sangat samjayate kama kamat krodhah abhijayate krodhat bhavati sammohah sammohat smritivibhraman smriti bhramsat buddhi nashah buddhinasat pranashyati."

Impurity of the mind begins with brooding on the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment to those objects; from attachment rises desire; from desire springs up anger; anger generates delusion; from delusion comes confused memory; from confused memory the ruin of reason and that pollutes the person's mind and separation comes from the Truth which results in suffering.

How to Purify the Mind?

For the answer to this question we have to take the advice of Devarshi Narada. In 'Narada Bhakti Sutras' from the 46th Aphorism through the 50th Aphorism, we find the practices for the

purification of mind. Narada used the word 'Maya' as the cause of impurity and suffering. Himself asking the question - *Kastarati kastarati mayam?* Who, who can cross the ocean of Maya?

1. *Yah sangam tyajati* - he who discards the company of the unholy

2. *Yo mahanubhavam sevate* - he who serves great spiritual persons

3. *Nirmamo bhavati* - he who gives up the idea of egotism

4. *Yo vivikta-sthanam sevate* - he who lives in solitude

5. *Yo lokabandham unmulayati* - he who uproots worldly bondages

6. *Yo nistraigunyo bhavati* - he who goes beyond the three gunas (sattva, rajas, and tamas)

7. *Yo yogaksemam tyajati* - he who renounces the idea of obtaining the objects of the world or their

preservation (crosses the ocean of delusion)

8. *Yah karmaphalam tyajati* - he who gives up all effects of action

9. *Karmani sannyasyati tato nirdvandvo bhavati* - he who renounces all actions, becomes free from duality

10. *Yo vedanapi sannyasyati, kevalamavicchinna-anuragam labhate* - he who discards even actions enjoined by the Vedas- he alone attains uninterrupted love

"Sa tarati sa tarati, sa lokanstarayati" - He does not only go beyond the ocean of maya but also helps others to do so.

On January 1, 1886 Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna blessed the humanity by saying, "May you all be spiritually awakened." Spiritual awakening is, in other words, to be established on the Eternal Happiness.



Sermon On The Mount (Mathew)

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (5.3)

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." (5.4)

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." (5.5)

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (5.6)

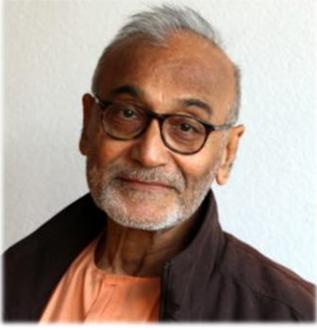
"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (5.7)

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (5.8)

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." (5.9)

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (5.10)

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." (5.11)



The Concept of Guru in Buddhist, Jain and Sikh Traditions

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This article is based on the talk delivered at the Guru Purnima (online) retreat organized by the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago

AUM Shri Gurubhyo namah, Harih AUM

Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Hinduism are the religions of India, which are called dharmic religions. They have certain things in common. We must remember that Buddhism and Jainism are reform movements. As reform movements, they kept some things and tried to modify the things, which they didn't accept.

In Buddhism and Jainism, they highlight asceticism more than in Hinduism. Jainism is very ancient, and none knows exactly when it began, because the earliest Tirthankars are shrouded in mythology. Anyhow, the particularity of Jainism is that it highlights asceticism tremendously, and the five vows, which are known in Hinduism as yama practices, constitute the cardinal doctrines in Jainism. These are the Mahāvratas for the sannyasins, the monks. Since the householders cannot follow them completely, they follow what is called the Anuvrata. So the idea is that the accent is on asceticism and monasticism in Jainism. Jainism talks about austerities too much, and they also practise this austerity. Even now you see Santhâra. Santhâra is the age-old practice of passing your last days through fasting, until you die. This is practised even now; it is their ancient religious practice.

Other things are very much related to food: you must not have a craving for tasty things, you must not eat too much, etc. These austerities are practised much, and of course other aspects of monastic life are also highlighted: you must try to avoid things, which rouse your passions, etc.

There are five types of gurus in Jainism and they are mentioned in their Navkar Mantra or Namokar Mantra. What is this mantra? Namō

Arihantânâm, Namō Siddhânâm, Namō âyariyânâm, Namō Uvajjhâyânâm, Namō loye savva sâhunâm, etc., it goes. They also take up the AUM. The A of the AUM is made up of three mâtrâs; the first two mâtrâs stand respectively for Arihantâ, and Asiri, another name for Siddha. The third mâtrâ of the A stands for Âchârya; the U of the AUM stands for what in Sanskrit is called upâdhyâya, 'teacher'; and finally the M of the AUM for Muni.

A Muni is any monk who is a great scholar. Any great scholar can be called a Muni. So their Namokar Mantra itself describes the five types of gurus. Arihantâs are very high. All Tirthankaras are Arihantâs, though not all Arihantâs are Tirthankars. The Arihantâs have gone beyond all the vices, all the defects you can conceive of. Next to them are Siddhas or Asiris. They are souls; they are disembodied persons or entities, and they have gone beyond the cycle of birth and death. So, in fact, sometimes in Jain temples there are statues of Asiris, of Siddhas, not seen as quite a person, but you see as if a person is there. So, such type of statues are made because Jains, both monks and householders, pray to these Siddhas for their own development in the following way: "Please help us to develop ourselves, and protect our souls from the effects of karma."

Earlier, of course, Jains were limited to India, but in modern days much Jainism has spread to Japan. There are at least five thousand Japanese people who call themselves Jains. It has caught the imagination of the Japanese people. There are many modern Jains who are spreading all over the world. There is a great catholicity in Jainism. In the Namokar Mantra "savva sahunâm" means all sadhus, across all the religions; Jains bow down to

them. This catholicity is there in Jainism.

Now I shall come to Buddhism. In Buddhism, there is a sutta called Kalama Sutta, especially recited by the southern Buddhists or Theravādīs. The sutta goes like this: "For us there's doubt, there's uncertainty as to which of these revered monks and Brahmins speak the truth and which, falsehood, this was the question put to Buddha". Buddha gave the answer: " Come, Kalamas! Do not go by oral tradition, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by a collection of scriptures, by logical reason, by Inferential reasoning, by theorizing, by considered acceptance of a view, by the seeming competence of a speaker or because you think the monk is our teacher. But when you know for yourselves that these things are unwholesome, these things are blameable, these things are censured by the wise, these things when undertaken and practiced, lead to harm and suffering, then you should abandon them, but when you know for yourself that it does the opposite, then you should engage in them." This reminds us of the words of Shri Ramakrishna that when you come across a potential teacher or Guru, you should observe him by daytime and also by nighttime and you should test him as the money changer tests his coins.

Now from the south I am moving north, from Sri Lanka to Tibet. The religion in Tibet is very confusing. It is a mixture, a real hotchpotch of many things, even now. A Lama is the Guru. He may usually be a monk, but may be a householder also. I have come across many Vajrayanist Lamas, who are householders. And there's a group of Vajrayanis in Tibet. All the different branches of Tibetan Buddhism practise a little of Vajrayana. They talk about the root Guru, which means the Guru with whom you are most familiar, to whom you are most grateful. You may learn from many Gurus. For example, we know the great Atisha, who is considered in Tibet as second only to Buddha, had 150 Gurus. He studied many branches of knowledge. Your root guru is one with whom you are most familiar, and you are most

grateful to. Then he will channel the blessings of the higher Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to you.

In the year 747 AD, 100 years after the demise of Emperor Harshavardhan, a monk from the Swat region, the present Swat in Pakistan, went to Tibet. He was Padmasambhava. He was mainly a Tantrist, as well as an expert in Buddhist theologies. But after his epoch there was chaos in Tibet. There was a king who believed in the Bon religion, a Pre-Buddhistic religion. He persecuted and killed many Buddhists. For 200 years there was civil war in Tibet. At the end of this chaos, the then king invited Atisha, who was the head of Vikramashilā. He was certainly one of the greatest scholarly monks India has produced. Around 1042 he went to Tibet, and there he wrote a small book of 67 verses giving the essence of the 3 paths of Buddhism - Mahāyāna, Therāvāda and Vajrayāna. He guided the Tibetans, and, even today, in Tibetan Buddhism, Atisha's heritage persists. There is the heritage of the tantras, and there is that of shamanic ideas and of some elements of the Bon religion, even today. The Dalai Lama is the head of the religion, but he's no longer the head of the state. He himself abandoned it, but there's a challenge to his authority by a group, which is settled in the UK and Geneva, for example. This schism is there, but still, Tibetan Buddhists retain very great wisdom.

Going further north towards China, Ch'an is the term for dhyāna. Dhyāna is not limited to the Ch'an School alone. The majority of the lay people are not formally tied to any branch. They take up something of Confucianism and something of Buddhism. For monastics, most Ch'an practitioners receive transmissions into certain Ch'an lineages, most commonly, either of the Linji or Caodong lineage, which are the most dominant. Some senior practitioners have also received transmissions from such schools as Tiantai or Huayan. Many temples belong to Ch'an school in name but also embrace practices from other groups, for example, the Pure Land, Tangmi, and Yogāchāra schools. Padmasambhava himself was a Yogāchāra teacher.

The Southern schools were very strong by the time of Ashoka. At the third Buddhist Council, there was a complete break between Mahâyânîs and Hinayânîs. Hinayânîs are called Therâvâdîs now.. Modern Therâvâda is actually a derivation from Vibhajjavâda. That means they divide the human personality too much and reject the concept of Atman, the Hindu Atman. They say that there is nothing like this. That is their idea. But they practise Sheela (right speech, right action , and right livelihood), and they practise meditation. Any monk is called a Bhante in Therâvâda. The elderly monks, normally in the Zen and Chân, are very severe—I mean, the severity of practice. So, their masters are real taskmasters, *uttama vaidya* in the language of Shri Ramakrishna. But in the Southern Buddhism there is more leniency.

In Shikhism, there were Shikh gurus; but since the passing away of the tenth guru in 1708, the Gurugranth is the Guru. I have attended many Shikh ceremonies. In one such ceremony held in Salt Lake City of the USA, I was very impressed; because I saw that they were treating the

Gurugranth as a living guru itself. They do the pooja, give it a resting place, just as we do, for example, in Vaishnava temples. The Gurugranth is their Guru. Of course, they take the whole set of ten gurus, beginning with Nânak. Japa, devotional singing and langar (giving of free food) are virtues accented upon in Shikhism. We need to learn this langar from Shikhs. In Gurugranth they have a place for such saints as Kabir etc. We would not have remembered Kabir today without the Gurugranth.

The sixth guru carried two swords symbolizing *miri* i.e. kingship in the community, and *piri* i.e. sainthood. The ninth guru laid down his life protesting against the persecution of Kashmiri Brahmins by the Emperor Aurangzeb. The heritage of *miri-cum-piri* was fortified by the introduction of Khâlsâ, the Shikh warrior community, by the tenth guru, as a means of protection against the Mughal Emperor who was bent upon crashing Shikhism.

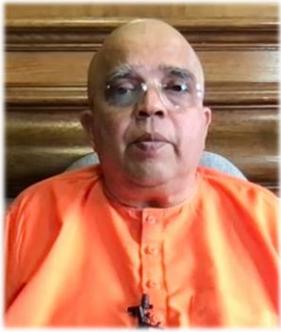
Thank you for giving me this opportunity. It is ennobling to talk about these dharmic religions.



“The rain could turn to gold, and still your thirst would not be slaked. Desire is unquenchable or it ends in tears.
(*Dhammapada*, 14.8)

“Just as a threaded (*sasutra*) needle is secure from being lost, in the same way a person given to self-study (*sasutra*) cannot be lost.”
(*Uttaradhyayana Sutra*, Ch. 20.52)

The word (*Shabad*) is the Guru, And the mind attuned to the *Shabad* is the disciple. The *Shabad* is the Guru, teacher, fathomless and calm, Without the *Shabad* the people wander astray, Attune your mind to the world, Guru.
(*Guru Granth Sahib*)



Concept of Guru according to the Upanishads

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This article is based on the talk delivered at the Guru Purnima (online) retreat organized by the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago

I am very grateful to revered Swami Ishatmananda for inviting me to talk on “Concept of Guru according to the Upanishads or Vedanta”.

As we all know, every spiritual tradition in India has insisted on the need of having a Guru, who initiates us into the truths of spiritual life. He is not only in a position to show us the path or the way to the goal of life, but he can also transmit the truth of his experience or realization to his disciples.

As Swamiji used to point out, Sri Ramakrishna used to say that religion is realization. It is not an intellectual understanding of the Shastras or Vedanta, but experiential knowledge. If that experiential knowledge has to be realized by the disciple, there is a need of a Guru from whatever tradition they belong to.

According to Western psychology, every human being has three faculties: the power of thinking, the power of feeling or emotions, and the power of will or volition. In the Indian spiritual tradition, a fourth power, which is very important, was discovered by our Indian Yogis. This was a great discovery, and is what practical Vedanta is all about—the power of re-straining thoughts, which is the practical aspect of Vedanta known as Yoga.

Yoga is therefore the practical side of Vedantic Sadhana or the Upanishadic Sadhana. Patanjali is believed to be the discoverer or maybe the exponent of the Yoga system. The Yoga system is based on the Sankhya philosophy, but Vedanta still uses the techniques, that is, the Sadhakas use the technique of restraining thoughts, or ‘Chittavriti Nirodha’, which is nothing but Patanjali’s Yoga.

However, people have these four faculties in different proportions. Not every one has the power

of thinking fully developed; some people have more emotions; and some are more activity oriented—they can be good ‘Karmis’, they can do Karma Yoga. But some people have the capacity to restrain their thoughts and practice Yoga. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say, “The mother knows what kind of food is suitable for feeding each of her children.” In the spiritual field, it is the Guru who understands the different requirements of the different disciples.

Now, we are going to discuss the concept of Guru in the Upanishads. Though the Upanishads have all the elements of Bhakti or Karma Yoga, and also Raja Yoga to some extent, the Upanishads primarily use the power of thinking. Jnana Yoga is based on the power of thinking.

We also have the great Bhakti tradition, where people who have more emotions use Bhakti Yoga to proceed in Sadhana to practice spirituality. Then there are ‘Karmis’, extremely active people who through unselfish actions or Karma Yoga strengthen their will, and the strengthened will enables them to realize God or Reality. And, finally, there are those quiet people who can restrain their thoughts. They want to be silent, and they use Raja Yoga or Patanjali’s Yoga as their Sadhana.

We can safely say, although it is not completely true, that the Upanishads are for aspirants who are strong in their power of thinking, whereas Bhakti Yoga is for people with strong emotions.

Now what do we mean by this practice of using the power of thinking? What is Jnana and how do we practice Jnana Yoga?

The first thing, which is essential, as Swamiji pointed out in all his Jnana Yoga lectures in

London and also some lectures he delivered in New York, is the concept of Shraddha. He asserts that everybody should read the Katha Upanishad, which was one of his favorite Upanishads. He says that we need to understand that faith or Shraddha is not just belief; it is belief based on conviction of the spiritual truths.

How does that conviction come?

If we cannot go directly to the scriptures to understand, and we cannot depend on our thinking alone, we must begin with faith in the Guru. That is how the Guru tradition in the Upanishads developed. It is very essential, as Swamiji said, that there is a need for Guru Parampara.

In Sankaracharya's commentaries on the Vedanta and the Upanishads, you will find the term 'Guru Parampara gat Jnana' —this is not just the Jnana you receive by learning scriptures, it has to come from a Parampara or an unbroken tradition of live transmission of knowledge. It is through this Parampara that the experiential knowledge, not the intellectual knowledge, comes.

Books are available to read and these days there are so many 'YouTube' lectures to watch and learn from. But by just learning ideas or understanding the scriptures and Upanishads, one cannot get true knowledge. One has to come into contact with a person who has experienced those truths himself.

Swami Vivekananda nicely says that only a lit lamp can light another lamp. Even though there may not be physical contact, the faith in the Guru, which is based on the conviction that the knowledge one receives from the Guru is what is best for us to practice. It should be re-sorted to in the sadhana of Jnana Yoga.

Faith in the Guru is the first step—Shraddha. Self-judgement and self-analysis are good. We have a rational capacity with which we can understand and analyze things. We think we are very wise, but it can delay the process of acquiring true knowledge according to Shankaracharya, who says Guru Parampara gives Jnana. Not Jnana from

any teacher. One should follow and have faith in the Guru and allow the Guru to decide what is best for us.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna says he is confused and tells Krishna, "I do not know what is good, and now I am surrendering to you to tell me what is good for me". When that humility based self-surrender comes, whether one is following the path of Bhakti, or any other path of Yoga, or even the Vedanta or the Upanishads, it can become a basis for spiritual progress.

The concept of the role of the Guru is there in all of these different traditions. In the Bhakti tradition, the Guru plays a slightly different role. Certain concepts are basic, but there are differences in other paths of Yoga. There is a difference in the conception of a Guru and also the path which should be followed.

The Upanishads do not have the concept of the Avatara, as in the Bhakti tradition. In the Puranic traditions, we have the concept of an Avatara, and it makes the role of the Guru quite easy. There are many other traditions, which have been combined in the Ramakrishna tradition, of which other speakers, revered Swamis, have spoken, and so I am not repeating what they said.

Our tradition is a mixture of the best in Jnana, the best in Bhakti and also the Tantras from which the concept of Bija has come. Harmony or synthesis of these traditions is what we find in the Ramakrishna tradition.

The topic, which was given to me, is the concept of the Guru in the Upanishads, and so I will restrict myself to that. Now, the Upanishads speak of three stages in the acquisition of knowledge.

The steps are:

Shravana—listening or reading.

Manana—thinking or understanding certain concepts, trying to argue, trying to have counter arguments until the doubts are cleared up. That is Manana.

Nidhidhyasana—once having got the conviction, one develops Shraddha in the Guru and does

contemplation or meditation, which is also necessary in Raja Yoga. However, without unshakable Shraddha and faith in the words of the Guru, even in the Jnana or the Vedanta tradition, one cannot achieve success.

So, the Upanishadic truths have to first be heard from the Guru. This is followed by elaborate discussions and arguments. When we read the Shankara Bhashya, we find Poorva Paksha and so many arguments. You might wonder, "What is the need for these?"

As Swami Vivekananda said, the need for all these things is to clear out all the dirt in the brain. In order to clear out whatever confusion is there, we have to argue and reason everything out. Then you do Tarka (reasoning). There are so many counter positions and Poorva Pakshas, which Shankaracharya insists upon, not because you have these doubts, but to anticipate such doubts which may come in the future and for you to clear all these doubts and have a clear understanding of the concepts. That is the role of the Guru in the Upanishads.

Finally, after a long period of rigorous discipline, when the Guru decides that the disciple is ready, he imparts the essence of the Upanishadic texts, which are often very cryptic phrases and known as Mahavakyas. They are like the Mantras in the Tantric tradition and other traditions where Mantra Diksha is given, but here the idea is that the ground work has to be prepared before these Mahavakyas have their desired effect.

First the Guru identifies the Adhikari, then he puts the disciple through a rigorous discipline of Sadhana, and then he imparts the knowledge, which the disciple has already gained intellectually, by the regular and systematic meditation on these Mahavakyas, which he heard from his Guru's mouth leading to a direct experience of those truths which are expressed by these Mahavakyas.

Once we had the opportunity to ask one of the Sankaras of the Dwaraka Muth that after we have heard these Mahavakyas, after we have realized it

and sort of experienced it, then what do we do? Does one still have to perform Sadhana? He said that we still have to perform Sadhana so that we make it our own and don't lose that experience.

So, even there, meditation is insisted upon. One has to practice the meditation on the mahavakya, just as he practices in other Sadhanas.

Now coming to other traditions of India, 'Gu' means darkness and 'ru' means dispelling of the darkness. So any one who dispels our darkness or ignorance is called a Guru.

What is this ignorance?

According to Vedanta, to put it very briefly, not being able to see the unified reality, the unified Consciousness behind the changing phenomenon of the universe, is ignorance. It is a very simple definition but very difficult to understand. As Thakur used to say in his very rustic language, the knowledge of the many is not true knowledge. Not being able to see the unified reality behind the changing phenomena of the universe is ignorance. Therefore, the Guru's role is to remove this. That is why Guru means one who dispels the darkness of ignorance. But this ignorance is so difficult to remove. It has become a habit with us because of our deep-rooted Samskaras or the inherent tendencies, which we have accumulated over several births.

Now, the Guru's role in the Upanishads or Vedanta is to systematically train the disciple through a very strict discipline of Sravana, Manana and Nidhidhyasana, which can dispel the ignorance that hides the ultimate truth, which is always there within but has to be discovered. Then ignorance is removed and the wonderful illumination comes.

The Chandogya Upanishad says, "...a person who gets a teacher attains knowledge. His delay is only as long as he is not free of his body. After that he becomes merged in the Self."

This means one who has a Guru; he alone can know the truth. By knowing the truth, one becomes the Truth. By knowing the Guru, one transforms oneself into the best and the noblest.

There is no other way. One has to take the Guru quite seriously and try to imbibe all his qualities, not just understand what he says but also try to reproduce and practice what he is practicing.

We have a beautiful prayer in the Upanishads. In fact, it is part of the Shanti Mantras, "Sahanaavavatu, Sahanau Bhunaktu, Saha Veeryam Karavaavahai." This is a prayer in the Indian tradition of Vedanta. There are Shanti Mantras in the beginning of the Upanishads. We begin with a prayer where the Guru says let us learn together, let us get energy together, let us perform all the actions together. It is this togetherness, the power and importance of the spiritual journey to be accomplished together, that is emphasized here.

This togetherness is expressed in the Shanti Mantras of all the Upanishads. This constant synchronization of all our actions with that of the Guru, whether we are working, walking, eating, etc., generates a tremendous energy between the Guru and disciple. That is the secret of the Guru Shishya tradition in the Upanishads and that propels the disciple onwards on his journey towards Brahman. That serenity, which is due to control of the senses, through that alone the disciple is able to progress.

In the Mundaka Upanishad, a person who is seeking spiritual truth in life is asked to seek for a Guru for guidance. Of course, Sri Ramakrishna, who was a living Upanishad himself, says "Satchitananda alone can be the Guru", of which the human Guru is a mere manifestation. It is the faith of the disciple in this truth that really makes the teachings of the Guru effective in the disciple's life.

What are the qualifications of the student who has approached the Guru? He is one whose mind is completely serene and whose senses are controlled. These are the two essential conditions.

The Adhikari's (or a qualified disciple's) qualities are very clearly defined. First, his mind has to have some kind of stability, some kind of serenity, and his senses have to be controlled. Otherwise, the knowledge he acquires will not be of any use. No amount of intellectual knowledge

of the Upanishads will help. Through the serenity, which is the result of the control of the senses, through that alone, the Mundaka Upanishad says, one has to know the immutable and true Purusha. There is no other way.

Shankara comments on this verse, saying why there is the need for a Guru. Even if one is well versed in the scriptures, one should not set about and seek the knowledge of Brahman by himself. Shankara goes to the extent of saying that even if one is well versed in the scriptures, the knowledge of Brahman is not possible without a Guru-Parampara based Jnana.

Thus, first and foremost the aspirant should have Shraddha, a basic yearning for progress to know the truths of Vedanta, and then he should have faith in the Guru as a manifestation of Satchidananda. The Guru is just not a human being. He has to be considered as the manifestation of Brahman, with whom the student is aspiring to realize his identity.

Without a true yearning to lead a pure life, without controlling the senses, the student or disciple will not have an attraction for the eternal Guru. It is only when he is done with the impermanent objects of desire, which are temporary, and with his senses under control, will he then have the tendency to seek for the permanent or eternal. As Sri Ramakrishna or Holy Mother says, "If you are happy with the toys, be busy with the toys, and Mother does not disturb you. Only when you are tired and want to go to the Mother, then alone the reality reveals itself."

Satchidananda reveals itself through the medium of the Guru. So, Brahman, whose nature is Satchidananda, the object of our supreme quest, leads us to transcendent truth. According to the Upanishads, Brahman cannot be known by our mental effort alone. That is why in the Kathopanishad, which Swamiji was very fond of, says that this Atman cannot be easily known or taught by a person of inferior intellect. When it is taught by a Guru, who is one with Brahman, there is no further trouble. It is subtler than the subtle and not arguable.

BHAGAVATA (9): *The Ten Special Features of the Bhagavata*

Swami Ishatmananda

The great editor of the Vedas, Vedavyasa, is also the composer of the Vedanta Sutras or Brahma Sutras. He also wrote 17 Puranas and finally as his last work, taking the essences of all his previous scriptures, he composed the Bhagavatam Mahapurana.

The Bhagavata is not only a Purana but a great Purana, adored by the highest rank of renouncers — the Paramahansas.

Srimad Vedavyasa wrote it and then taught it to his illustrious monastic son, Suka Deva. Suka Deva, the great monk, then taught it to other monks and munis.

A Purana is the ancient history authentically recorded by some excellent personalities, known as Sutas, who were the possessors of very sharp memories. They used to travel and gather information about the kings and their kingdoms, the condition of the subjects, culture, etc.

Usually the Puranas have five topics, the Bhagavata has ten. In the 10th chapter of the 2nd book, Suka describes these 10 subjects.

1. Sarga: Creation in general by God
2. Visarga: Creation in particular by Brahma
3. Sthana or Sthiti: Activities of the Lord for the maintenance of the world.
4. Poshana: Preservation
5. Manvantara time: Pious mode of living
6. Uti: Karmic tendencies in latent and active

forms

7. Ishanukatha: Description of the Lord's Incarnations
8. Nirodha: Dissolution of the jivas, retaining their tendencies, in the Lord.
9. Mukti: Liberation from all desires
10. Asraya: The source of creation and dissolution of the jivas and the universe, which is known as Brahma or Paramatman.

The 3rd verse of the 10th chapter explains creation (sarga and visarga):

The formation of the various categories of creation began when the equilibrium of the Primal Energy was disturbed due to Divine will.

For the categories of Creation (please follow the table below)

24 formula of creation is known as Sarga.

Creation of Brahma is known as Visarga.

Sthana: The Supreme God created matter and being, and He has created a system to protect them. A girl does not get attached to a baby, but the moment she becomes a mother the loving and protecting power of the mother comes.

Monks practice total dependence on God and believe in God's power for the maintenance of His creation.

Poshana: The Supreme God granting protection. This grace comes to those who sincerely and devotedly seek protection from Him.

Gross Elements	Subtle Elements	Organs of perception	Organs of actions	Mind-stuff
Earth	Smell	Nose	Mouth	Ego, intellect, Memory, mind
Water	Taste	Tongue	Hands	
Light/Fire	Form	Eye	Legs	
Air	Touch	Skin	Excretory	
Space	Sound	Ear	Reproductive	

There was a guard at Dakshineswar, who was also a wrestler. He was challenged by another wrestler. Sri Ramakrishna observed and was delighted that along with his practice of physical exercises he fervently prayed to the Divine Mother, Kali. He won the wrestling competition against a much more powerful opponent.

In the Bhgavata itself we find the story of a king, who was devoted to Krishna, who was saved from his enemy while he was meditating.

Uti: Desires of Beings—latent and active—are for Progeny, wealth, and popularity.

To help others without any motive except love is karma yoga, which leads to liberation. Selfish and egoistic work is the cause of bondage.

Manvantara Time: It is traditionally accepted that the calculation of time began from the great Manu, the founder of the Book of Law. Until today we find that there have been 14 Manus since the first Manu. Manu is a position not a person.

Ishanukatha: Discourses about God and His

devotees. Sri Ramakrishna recommended constantly repeating His name and singing His glory.

Nirodha: When the great God goes back into His meditation, all the beings along with their karmic results merge in Him.

Mukti: Properly understanding the folly of this creation, when a being frees itself from all desires and goes back to its original state in Mukti.

Asraya: That from where everything was projected (not created) is the Source or Ashraya.

In the 2nd book, 10th chapter, 13th verse, it is clearly stated, "The One all-powerful Supreme God, being desirous to assume various forms, left the seat of meditation and divided Himself through His Divine Power, Maya, into three divisions. These three divisions are:

Adhidaiva	Divine, Celestial
Adhyatma	Human
Adhibhuta	Material

BHAGAVATA (10): *The First Marriage In the World*

"The One being, desirous to have different forms, divided Himself through His divine power into three parts: Divine, Human and Material."

Creation began. And in reply to the questions of King Parikshit, the great Muni, Suka, told him, quoting the conversation between Vidura and Maitreya, "The Supreme God created Brahma, the Four-faced One. What Brahma did with those four faces?"

In the third book, 12th chapter, Verse 37 we find, "Brahma with his four faces directed to the East, South, West and North gave out four Vedas—Rik, Sama, Yajur and Atharva, respectively, as well as the four functions of the sacrificial priests.

The whole of the 12th chapter of the 3rd book gives a very interesting description of the creation that was projected from Brahma. Using his four faces, he created knowledge of medicine, weaponry, art & culture, architecture, as well as,

history, Puranas, and Vedic ceremonies.

Four Parts of Dharma: Learning, Charity, Austerity, Truthfulness

Four Ashramas: Studentship, Family Life, Retired Life, Renunciation

Four Types of Continence

1. Savitra (3 days)

2. Prajapatyam (One Year)

3. Brahma-prajapatyam (Observing till the end of study)

4. Brihat (Whole life)

Four Types of Livelihood for the Householder

1. Varta (Agriculture and Industry)

2. Sanchayana (Teaching or Priesthood)

3. Salina (Without begging)

4. Siloncha (Collecting grains after harvest)

Four Types of Vanaprasthas

1. Vaikhana (Living on whatever they get)

2. Balakhilyas (Who do not accumulate)

3. Audumbaras (Living on whatever fruits they get)

4. Phenapas (Living on those fruits that have fallen from the tree)

Four Types of Sannyasins

1. Kutichaka (Live in one place and practice spiritual disciplines)

2. Bahvoda (Move to different places mainly to get knowledge)

3. Hamsa (Established in the practice of jnana)

4. Nishkriya (One who has realized the Atman and is beyond all duties)

Brahma was going on creating and forming systems, then he observed that his created beings, like his mind-born sons and the rishis, were not helping him to expand the creation. Then Brahma lamented, "It is surprising! I, Brahma, am constantly trying to expand the creation, but the number of offspring is not increasing. Is providence against me?"(3/12/50).

Brahma had already created four mind-born sons, but they like their father preferred to meditate on the Supreme Being rather than working for creation. The great thinkers and Munis were also of no use.

Then he divided his body into two parts. (3/12/51)

Brahma divided himself into two parts, one man and the other woman. With the forms Man and Woman needed names. The man, who had knowledge inborn in him, (got the name) Swayambhu Manu,. The woman, Satarupa, became his wife.

Hearing this story, Saunaka, the senior most of all the Rishis, asked Suta, "What did Manu do to

bring out into manifestation all the Jivas?"

Suta said, "Along with his wife, Swayambhu bowed down before Brahma and said, "You are the Creator and Nourisher of all beings—you are the Father. In what ways can your children serve you?"

You can imagine the joy of Brahma! "All children should be like you. Give birth to many children like you and help in the creation of the Supreme Being. This is the best service you can do for me. The inner controller of all will also be pleased with you."

Meditating on the Supreme Being the couple gave birth to five children, two sons and three daughters. The daughters grew up and, as the parents got worried about their marriage, they started out searching for good husbands.

The great Lord had to intervene in this. Lord Vishnu met a great sage and said, "The day after tomorrow there will arrive here to meet you the Manu, famous for his goodness and learning. He rules the earth at his capital, Brahmavarta. He will come with his wife. They would like to give in marriage to you their daughter, who is good natured and beautiful." (3/21/25)

Understanding the will of the Supreme God, Vishnu, the sage waited for the marriage proposal. When Swayambhu arrived and requested the great man of knowledge to accept his daughter as his wife, he answered, "As you wish let the marriage of your daughter take place in accordance with Vedic dictum. It will be the first marriage, and this will lay down the guidelines for marriage." (3/22/15/16).



Salutation to you whose power is knowledge. O Lord, you have assumed these forms out of your Maya. Taking on the quality of Rajas, O Lord, you have become the cause of this manifested world.

--Bhagavatam

Introduction to the Cover Page: *Measuring Time & The Immeasurable Eternity*

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These last few days many of us are wishing each other all the best for the new year. In fact, at all times some community or the other continues sharing New Year greetings among themselves.

A year or a calendar year is nothing but a longer measurement of time, while a watch or a timepiece measures shorter durations of time. There are many methods to calculate time based on solar, lunar, sidereal etc. following the changes around the planet earth. Since the ancient times, human beings have been observing the nature. Solar or sidereal watches were there too. For example, thousands of years ago, during the Vedic age, people in India used to find out the appropriate time to perform ritual worship or to start harvesting.

Many books and research publications are available on the definition and measurement of time. There is no point in retying all the information that is available – online and offline. Instead let us see how Sri Ramakrishna, Ma Sarada and Swami Vivekananda used both the concept of time and timepiece to elevate us spiritually.

In Sanskrit time is called “kāla”. The power that controls kāla is called Kāli, the Divine Mother. Sri Ramakrishna’s chosen ideal is Mother Kāli. About time, Sri Krishna says in the Shanti Gita:

कालेन जायते सर्वं काले च परितिष्ठति।

काले विलयमाप्नोति सर्वं कालवशानुगाः ॥

kālena jāyate sarvaṃ kāle ca paritiṣṭhati,

kāle vilayamāpnoti sarve kālavasānugāḥ.

Everything born in time, all things are sustained in time, and in time all things are dissolved.

Being under the spell of time, which is beginningless, it is impossible to define it. It can be done only when one can transcend the mind that conceives the concept of time.

An article that was published in *Psychology Today* in 2014 reported that *two- and three-year-old Children’s understanding of time is mainly limited to “now and not now”. Five- and six-year-olds can grasp the ideas of past, present, and future. Seven- to ten-year-olds can use clocks and calendars.* Paramahansas or the men of absolute wisdom attain the state of mind of a four or five year old child. For them *kāla baddha bartamāne* – time is confined within present only.

There are many ways to look at time -- the way scientists would explain time is bound to be different from the explanations of the philosophers. However, the point on which all will agree is this: time is related to space. As long as the concept of universe is there, the concept of time is there.

In general time is a constant forward flow of events. Aristotle defines it as a kind of 'number of change' with respect to the before and after, while physicists would say “it is operationally defined as ‘what a clock reads’”. Einstein related space and time in his special theory of relativity. In quantum mechanics, time is not considered a standard 'observable' and physicists attempting to unify quantum mechanics with Einstein's general theory of relativity face the so-called 'problem of time'.

In the modern age timepieces are used to measure the time. The chronological development of portable timepieces is fascinating. These types of watches were invented in the early 15th century in Germany. It was around the time when Christopher Columbus landed on an island in the Bahamas (1492) or the Bhakti movement in India was happening under the leaderships of Sri Chaitanya (1485–1533) or Mira Bai (1498 -1547).

In the beginning, "clock-watches" were fastened

to clothing or worn on a chain around the neck and had only an hour hand. The purpose of using such watches was not to tell the time. The accuracy was so poor, with errors of perhaps several hours per day, that they were practically useless. They were made as jewelry and novelties for the nobility, valued for their fine ornamentation and accurate timekeeping was of very minor importance.

In spiritual life also such show-off business is totally useless. A Brahma devotee Sivanath was greatly impressed by the Master's utter simplicity and abhorrence of praise. He recorded an incident which he witnessed in Sri Ramakrishna's room. *One day he was seated with Sri Ramakrishna in the latter's room when several rich men of Calcutta arrived. The Master left the room for a few minutes. In the mean time Hriday, his nephew, began to describe his Samadhi to the visitors. The last few words caught the Master's ear as he entered the room. He said to Hriday: "What a mean-spirited fellow you must be to extol me thus before these rich men! You have seen their costly apparel and their gold watches and chains, and your object is to get from them as much money as you can. What do I care about what they think of me?"*

During Sri Ramakrishna's time, in Calcutta watches were used as jewelry and status symbols. The Master used to mention watches as marks of rajasik or egotistic nature. He said: "... among the worldly there are people with the traits of rajas. Such a man has a watch and chain, and two or three rings on his fingers. The furniture of his house is all spick and span. On the walls hang portraits of the Queen, the Prince of Wales, and other prominent people; the building is whitewashed and spotlessly clean. His wardrobe is filled with a large assortment of clothes; even the servants have their livery, and all that."

In Europe, a great leap forward in accuracy occurred in 1657 with the addition of the balance spring to the balance wheel. Around 1680 the minute hand was added to the watch and finally we heard the tick-tock sound of seconds hand.

Let's remember one of Ma Sarada's teachings in

this context. *"Always repeat the name of the Chosen Ideal like the ever-moving hand of a clock."* [Gospel of the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi as recorded by Her devotees and children].

Though the British had predominated in watch manufacture for much of the 17th and 18th centuries, in 1830 a Swiss modified the design of the timepiece for mass production and the industry came to the US around 1850. The American clock industry, with scores of companies located in Connecticut's Naugatuck Valley, was producing millions of clocks, earning the region the nickname, "Switzerland of America".

Still, watches were very expensive. In this context we can remember a golden teaching that is related to Swamis Vivekananda and Turiyananda. It was narrated by Swami Turiyananda himself. They were going to the US by ship. Now and then Swami Turiyananda was walking to the deck leaving his watch in his cabin. Noticing this Swamiji told Turiyananda, *"Brother, why do you tempt the cabin boy to steal the watch? He is poor. It is natural for him to be tempted take it."* This is how Swamiji taught people.

During the 20th century, the mechanical design of the watch became standardized and also wrist watches advanced over pocket watches. A market for men's wristwatches was coming into being at the time. The Garstin Company of London patented a 'Watch Wristlet' design in 1893 -- the year Swamiji appeared at the first Parliament of the World's Religions.



Liberty Bell: That was used during 1893 Chicago World Fair (photo courtesy: periodpaper.com)

It is interesting to note that as the Parliament began, a replica of the Liberty Bell rang out ten times, once for each of the major religious traditions represented. Long before common people could afford a timepiece, twenty four hour time used to get divided in six or 8 watches or periods. In India 8 watches were more common, 4 watches during day and 4 watches (periods) during night. Still, today on the great night of Shiva, all 4 watches of worship is being performed. In the west church bells would ring to mark each watch and they had six watches (periods) bell also.

The connection between a bell and time is obvious but the very first Parliament of Religions also showed the connection between the striking of a bell and religion.

Religion is deeply connected with time. As Sri Krishna said in the Bhagavad Gita that whenever, i.e., at the time, evil becomes dominant in the society, God will himself come to this earth to restore religion, *dharmā*.

Sri Ramakrishna used the watch as an example to explain diversity in religious perspectives. *"You may say that there are many errors and superstitions in another religion. I should reply: Suppose there are. Every religion has errors. Everyone thinks that his watch alone gives the correct time. It is enough to have yearning for God. It is enough to love Him and feel attracted to Him: Don't you know that God is the Inner Guide? He sees the longing of our heart and the yearning of our soul. Suppose a man has several sons. The older boys address him distinctly as 'Baba' or 'Papa', but the babies can at best call him 'Ba' or 'Pa'. Now, will the father be angry with those who address him in this indistinct way? The father knows that they too are calling him, only they cannot pronounce his name well. All children are the same to the father. Likewise, the devotees call on God alone, though by different names. They call on one Person only. God is one, but His names are many."*

Our judgment follows our perception – may it be of a religion or a person. M, the writer of the "Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna" found: *"Totapuri was*

indeed a great soul." However, the Master told him, *"But Hazra says he was an ordinary man. There's no use in discussing these things. Everyone says that his watch alone gives the correct time."*

It's a question of one's earnestness to realize the Truth. M records: *Sri Ramakrishna was talking to Kali, the Divine Mother of the Universe. He said: "Mother, everyone says, 'My watch alone is right.' The Christians, the Brahmos, the Hindus, the Mussalmans, all say, 'My religion alone is true.' But, Mother, the fact is that nobody's watch is right. Who can truly understand Thee? But if a man prays to Thee with a yearning heart, he can reach Thee, through Thy grace, by any path. ..."*

But how will that grace come? That, too, Sri Ramakrishna answers, *"Ah, that restlessness is the whole thing. Whatever path you follow-whether you are a Hindu, a Mussalman, a Christian, a Sakta, a Vaishnava, or a Brahmo - the vital point is restlessness. God is our Inner Guide. It doesn't matter if you take a wrong path-only you must be restless for Him. He Himself will put you on the right path. "Besides, there are errors in all paths. Everyone thinks his watch is right; but as a matter of fact no watch is absolutely right. But that doesn't hamper one's work. If a man is restless for God he gains the company of sadhus and as far as possible corrects his own watch with the sadhu's help."*

Why only "Sadhu's help"? Sri Ramakrishna explains it in the course of a conversation with Girish Ghosh – who, according to Sri Ramakrishna, had about 125% devotion:

MASTER: *"There are different views. All these views are but so many paths to reach the same goal. But everyone believes that his view alone is right, that his watch alone keeps correct time."*

GIRISH (to M.): *"Do you remember what Pope says about it? 'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none go just alike, yet each believes his own."*

MASTER (to M.): *"What does it mean?"*

M: *"Every one thinks that his own watch keeps the correct time. But different watches do not give the same time."*

MASTER: *"But however wrong the watches may be, the Sun never makes a mistake. One should check one's watch with the sun."*

Time has a beginning -- as far as the existence of the universe is concerned. For this universal system, the starting point was 13.799 billion years ago when the Big Bang occurred.

Will time end? Science does not have an answer. If the universe expands forever, time would continue. If a new Big Bang occurs, our timeline would end and a new one would begin. There is no concept of timelessness in empirical science .

If a system is unchanging, it appears timeless. Experiments show moving clocks run slower than stationary clocks, with the effect becoming more pronounced as the moving clock approaches light speed.

Time is the progression of events from the past into the future. Time moves only in one direction. It is possible to move forward in time, but not backward as the idea of traveling back in time, poses problems. One issue is causality or cause and effect. Moving back in time could cause a temporal paradox e.g., the "grandfather paradox". According to the paradox, if one travels back in time and kills one's grandfather before his/her mother or father was born, then that person's own birth could be prevented. So though according to many physicists time travel to the past is impossible, there are solutions to a temporal paradox, such as traveling between parallel universes or branch points.

Scientists see memory formation as the basis for human perception of time though mental time and clock time are two totally different things. They flow at varying rates. Adrian Bejan, a professor at Duke University explains Time is happening in the mind's eye. It is related to the number of mental images the brain encounters and organizes and the state of our brains as we age. When we get older, the rate at which changes in mental images are perceived decreases because of several transforming physical features, including vision,

brain complexity, and later in life, degradation of the pathways that transmit information. And this shift in image processing leads to the sense of time speeding up.

Though the clock will continue to tick strictly, days will go by on the calendar, and the years will seem to fly by ever faster. Still, we are not entirely prisoners of time. There is a way to go beyond that. That is love – love for God or Love for the Self.

Love does not develop suddenly. Love does not develop suddenly, but rather gradually by reading, hearing, seeing. After one sees one's beloved loses the all lower understandings including time. In Sri Ramakrishna's words, *"Better than reading is hearing, and better than hearing is seeing. One understands the scriptures better by hearing them from the lips of the guru or of a holy man. Then one doesn't have to think about their non-essential part. Hanuman said: 'Brother, I don't know much about the phase of the moon or the position of the stars. I just contemplate Rama'."*

This advice of Sri Ramakrishna's is supported by his experience - his love for Narendra. The Master continues, *"After attaining God one forgets His external splendour; the glories of His creation. One doesn't think of God's glories after one has seen Him. The devotee, once immersed in God's Bliss, doesn't calculate any more about outer things. When I see Narendra, I don't need to ask him: 'What's your name? Where do you live?' Where is the time for such questions? Once a man asked Hanuman which day of the fortnight it was. 'Brother,' said Hanuman, 'I don't know anything of the day of the week, or the fortnight, or the position of the stars. I think of Rama alone.' "*

Time is a condition of the transmission of thought. It is entirely a dependent existence; it changes with every change of our mind. Sometimes in a dream one imagines that one has lived several years, at other times several months were passed in a second. So, time is entirely dependent on our state of mind.

When the mind attains a mindless state – not only time, but name, form, and all concepts of duality dissolve. Hanuman saw both the personal

God and the formless Reality. Sri Ramakrishna tells us, *"Rama asked Hanuman, 'Hanuman, what attitude do you cherish toward Me when you worship Me?' Hanuman answered: 'Sometimes I see that You are the whole and I am a part; sometimes I see that You are the Master and I am Your servant. But Rama, when I have the Knowledge of Reality, then I find that You are I and I am You.'*

Different paths are needed as long as one is trying to go beyond mind, beyond time. After attainment of the Truth it becomes all One. *"Once, while going to Kamarpukur, I was overtaken by a storm. I was in the middle of a big meadow. The place was haunted by robbers. I began to repeat the names of all the deities: Rama, Krishna, and Bhagavati. I also repeated the name of Hanuman. I chanted the names of them all. What does that mean? Let me tell you. While the servant is counting out the money to purchase supplies, he says, 'These pennies are for potatoes these for egg-plants, these for fish.' He counts the money separately, but after the list is completed, he puts the coins together."*

There is a story in the Mahabharata. At the time of a contest, Drona the the archery teacher of the Kruru dynasty asked Arjuna to shoot at a wooden bird. Before he released his arrow, Arjuna was asked by his teacher what was he saw. Arjuna could see only the eye of the bird. Sri Ramakrishna used this example to emphasize how the one-pointed love alone takes one beyond the illusion of time. *"He who sees only the eye of the bird can hit the mark. He alone is clever who sees that God is real and all else is illusory. What need have I of other information? Hanuman once remarked: 'I don't know anything about the phase of the moon or the position of the stars. I only contemplate Rama.'*

Sri Ramakrishna said, from a devotee's

perspective, that he is an incarnation of Rama. Swami Vivekananda confessed before Ma Sarada that he is none other than the servant of Sri Rama – the great Hanuman. Therefore, let's finish our journey all the way from our understanding of time and timepieces to the timeless One, with Swamiji's story. It is published in the "Western Admirers of Ramakrishna and His Disciples" by Gopal Stavig .

Tirtha Rama (1873 - 1906) was a professor of mathematics at the government university in Punjab. The book says: *"In 1897 Vivekananda spoke three times before a large outdoor gathering at Lahore, since no building could hold the sizable crowd. Swamiji ate a meal at Tirtha Rama's residence. In Lahore, he convinced him to renounce the world and become a monk. In return he gave Swamiji, whom he admired, a copy of Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass. Concerning Swamiji's lecture on "Vedanta" in Lahore, Tirtha Rama wrote in a letter of November 16, 1897: It lasted for full two and a half hours. The listeners were so deeply engrossed, and it created such an atmosphere, that all idea of time and space was lost. At times, one required absolute realization of oneness between oneself and the cosmic Atman. It struck at the roots of ego and pride in self. In short, it was such a grand success as is seldom seen*

During his meeting with Swamiji, Tirtha Ram asked Swamiji to keep his gold watch as a memento of his gratitude, saying "Every time you see that watch, you'll remember me." Swamiji accepted the watch, thanked Tirtha Ram, and then handed it back, saying, "I will use it in your pocket." Tirtha Ram then asked, "Swamiji can you give me a message?" Whereupon, Swamiji countered, "What time is it?" Tirtha Ram pulled out his watch and said, "It is one." Swamiji said, "Remember that."



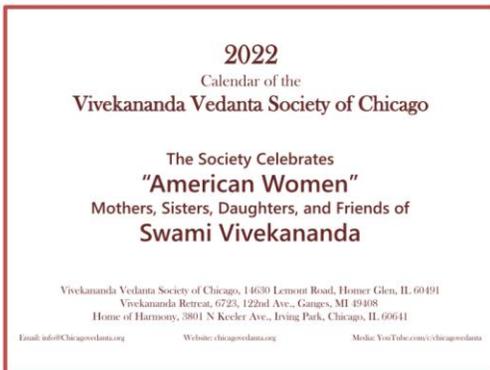
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